

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 118342

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

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EXDIS CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AS, US, PFOR

SUBJECT: WHITLAM CALL ON PRESIDENT FORD -- HIGHLIGHTS OF
CONVERSATION

1. DURING PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM'S CALL ON PRESIDENT
FORD, THE PRESIDENT EMPHASIZED THAT THE US WILL KEEP ITS
PROMISES AND STAY STRONG, AND SPECIFICALLY INTENDS TO KEEP
ITS COMMITMENTS TO ALLIES AND THE WORLD. WHITLAM SAID THIS
WAS GOOD TO HEAR, AND THAT AUSTRALIA WANTS TO HELP IN THAT
PROCESS. THE PRESIDENT WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE US DOES NOT
WANT POTENTIAL ENEMIES TO GET THE IDEA THAT THEY CAN FISH
IN TROUBLED WATERS.

2. THE PRESIDENT TOLD WHITLAM THAT WE APPRECIATE THE
STRONG POSITION HE HAS TAKEN ON OUR INSTALLATIONS IN
HIS COUNTRY. WE ARE GOING TO MOVE AHEAD IN OUR TALKS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 118342

WITH MOSCOW, AND THESE INSTALLATIONS ARE IMPORTANT.

WHITLAM SAID: QUOTE: IT IS A CONTRIBUTION WE THOUGHT WE COULD MAKE TO BALANCE THE FEELING OF DETENTE YOU AND THE SOVIETS HAVE DEVELOPED. THIS COULD HAVE BEEN AN ISSUE IN AUSTRALIA BUT IT HAS BEEN COMPLETELY DEFUSED... THEY WILL TRUST MY JUDGMENT...UNQUOTE.

3. WHITLAM SAID AUSTRALIA IS WILLING TO HELP WITH RECONSTRUCTION IN INDOCHINA AND WITH THE RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. WHITLAM NOTED THAT AUSTRALIA ASSISTED WITH THE EVACUATION AND HUMANITARIAN RELIEF. PRESIDENT FORD NOTED THAT AUSTRALIA WAS HELPFUL IN DANANG. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT ANYTHING AUSTRALIA COULD DO ON REFUGEES WOULD HELP. WHITLAM SAID THAT AUSTRALIA WILL ROUGHLY DO ONE HALF OF WHAT CANADA DOES.

4. WHITLAM NOTED AUSTRALIAN AID TO INDONESIA. PRESIDENT FORD SAID WE HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY INDONESIA'S PROGRESS, WHICH HAS BEEN HELPED BY ENERGY EARNINGS. WE WILL DO WHAT WE CAN TO BE HELPFUL IN ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE. WE THINK IT VITALLY IMPORTANT TO PRESERVE THE ORIENTATION OF THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT AND ARE GLAD THAT AUSTRALIA WILL HELP. WHITLAM STATED THAT AUSTRALIA IS EMPHASIZING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH JAPAN AND INDONESIA, AND SAID: QUOTE: IT FITS IN WITH WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO DO. UNQUOTE. THE PRESIDENT SAID STABILITY IN THAT REGION WILL INEVITABLY INCREASE NOW THAT WE ARE OVER THE HUMP. WHITLAM REMARKED THAT AUSTRALIA IS TRYING TO DEVELOP CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE PHILIPPINES.

5. WHITLAM EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE PROSPECT OF A US AND SOVIET NAVAL BUILD-UP IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, AND SUGGESTED THAT THE US AND USSR CONFER. THE PRESIDENT SAID WE ARE GOING TO PROCEED WITH DIEGO GARCIA, WHICH WILL GIVE US A CAPABILITY OUR MILITARY PEOPLE SEE AS A NECESSARY BACKSTOP. IT IS NOT BECAUSE WE WANT ANY MAJOR

INSTALLATION; IT WILL NOT BE A MAJOR FACILITY. SECRETARY KISSINGER SAID THAT HE HAD TOLD THE PRIME MINISTER THAT,
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 118342

AFTER WE HAVE THE PRINCIPLE OF THE DIEGO GARCIA INSTALLATION ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS, WE WILL CONSIDER INDIAN OCEAN ARMS LIMITATION TALKS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. THE PRESIDENT NOTED THAT WE NEED SOMETHING TO BARGAIN WITH. WHITLAM SAID: QUOTE: WE ALL WILL NOT BE HAPPY. UNQUOTE.

6. THE PRESIDENT NOTED THAT ONE-THIRD OF OUR NAVY IS NUCLEAR-POWERED. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE LIABILITY

LEGISLATION PASSED BY CONGRESS WILL RELIEVE THE PROBLEM
PREVENTING US NPW VISITS TO AUSTRALIA. WHITLAM SAID IT
DID RELIEVE ONE PROBLEM, BUT NOTED THE ENVIRONMENTAL
PROBLEM AND THE NEED TO CONSULT STATE AUTHORITIES. HE
ADDED: QUOTE: I DO NOT THINK THERE WILL BE ANY
DIFFICULTY. UNQUOTE. INGERSOLL

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